United Nations A/62/61–E/2007/7

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2006

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-second session
Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2007
Social and human rights questions: social development

Follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In compliance with resolution 60/2 of 6 October 2005, section I of the present report addresses the progress achieved and the constraints that young people face in relation to their participation in the global economy. The report also includes the identification of possible indicators to be used in assessing implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

Section II of the present report responds to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/15, in which the Council requested a report on the progress achieved by the Youth Employment Network. It reviews the key achievements of the Network, discussing progress in lead countries and providing an update on the status of national action plans for youth employment in Member States.

06-61173 (E) 040107

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I. Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond: progress and constraints

A. Introduction

1. In its resolution 60/2 of 6 October 2005, the General Assembly took note of the three clusters of priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond presented in the report entitled "World Youth Report 2005",[1] and requested the Secretary-General to provide the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, through the Commission for Social Development at its forty-fifth session, with a comprehensive report on the implementation of one of the three clusters.

2. The present report presents a review of the progress made and the constraints that young people face in relation to their participation in the global economy. The World Programme of Action for Youth and follow-up General Assembly resolution 60/2 identified 15 priority areas of youth development that are key to the successful transition of youth to adulthood. These priority areas are grouped into three areas — youth in the global economy, youth in civil society, and youth and their well-being. Each cluster relates to different aspects of the development of young people. In view of the priority theme of the Commission for Social Development at its forty-fifth session on the theme "Promoting full employment and decent work for all", the present report focuses on the cluster "Youth in the global economy". This cluster includes not only employment, which is the specific focus of the forty-fifth session of the Commission for Social Development, but also covers globalization, poverty and hunger, and education, which are critical determinants of the availability of decent work and sustainable livelihoods for youth.

3. Resolution 60/2 also requested the Secretariat to establish, in collaboration with other relevant United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, a broad set of indicators related to youth for monitoring the situation of young people in relation to the World Programme of Action for Youth. Therefore, the report also identifies possible indicators to be used in assessing progress in addressing the goals of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

4. Section II of the present report responds to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/15, in which the Council requested a report on the progress achieved by the Youth Employment Network. It updates and builds upon earlier reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the Network, and therefore should be read in conjunction with the reports on promoting youth employment (A/58/229) and on the global analysis and evaluation of national action plans on youth employment (A/60/133).

B. Youth development in a globalizing world

5. In 2005, youth, defined as persons aged 15 to 24 years, accounted for nearly 18 per cent of the world population, and that group will expand by another

[1] A/60/61-E/2005/7.

31 million by 2015.[2] Owing to a combination of factors, youth today are better poised than ever before to participate in, and benefit from, global development. The majority of youth around the world is healthy, having survived childhood years, which only a few decades ago accounted for considerably higher infant and child mortality. Compared to previous generations, a higher proportion of young people today have completed primary schooling. Youth in many countries have the added advantage of increased access to the media and communication technologies. There is a growing interconnectivity among people across the world, nurturing the realization that the world is becoming — albeit slowly — a true global community. Youth are key links in this process. Furthermore, across the world, young people want to be included in local and global development as important and equal participants, rather than as passive bystanders unable to shape their own future.

6. Although the present cohort of youth has numerous advantages and assets, it also faces a complex and rapidly evolving economic and social environment where new opportunities coexist with major constraints and obstacles. In many ways, every market in the world is becoming more demanding, and increased competition is affecting the global marketplace and its rules and practices. Forces of globalization often impose constraints on national policies, and not every country has the means to manage its integration into the global economy and to provide its citizens with social and economic opportunities. Youth often remain in a vulnerable situation and lack the requisite knowledge and skills to adapt to a new economic and social environment. With an uneven distribution of economic growth across and within countries, youth are facing not only the traditional (largely domestic) barriers to their development, but they must also surmount new barriers associated with the changing global economy.

7. In the past two decades or so, Governments everywhere have made considerable strides to improve economic performance by promoting greater productivity, lowering or recovering costs and promoting private sector development. A thrust of these changes has been to improve access to the global market for goods, services and capital by lowering or removing barriers to international transactions. This process of liberalization of international trade and finance has been a major force in increasing the integration of the global economy. The opening up of international global markets has been associated with a wave of related forces that have affected social policy, giving rise to concerns about income distribution, inequality and social exclusion. As a result of liberalization, major changes have also occurred in the labour market. There is greater wage flexibility and less employment protection, and, in many instances, minimum wages have been eroded or have become less responsive to increases in productivity. These developments cannot but affect young people.

8. Whether on political, socio-economic or humanitarian grounds, issues such as hunger and poverty, lack of education, ill health, joblessness and social exclusion are attracting more and more attention worldwide. There is, however, a growing understanding that effective and forward-looking national social and economic policies are essential in addressing these challenges that citizens of many countries, including young people, are facing. A range of national policies, focusing on trade,

[2] See *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.XIII.5), and United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2003 Revision* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.XIII.6).

finance, knowledge, technology and investment, remains key to a country's beneficial integration in the global economy.[3] National policies and international cooperation that address poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and other social goals are also required.

9. In addressing the priority areas under the cluster, "Youth in the global economy", the report first highlights how youth have fared generally in the context of globalization. This leads into a discussion of progress with respect to poverty and hunger, education and employment. Although each priority area is examined separately, it is important to note the strong interrelationship among areas.

1. Globalization

10. Globalization is a complex phenomenon that offers many opportunities, but also poses many risks. It presents a major challenge to policymaking and implementation, both at the national and international levels. Globalization has increasingly transformed the global markets for goods, services and capital, and has introduced new ideas, knowledge and technology. This transformation has created enhanced opportunities for youth to participate in the global economy, especially in those countries that have been able to generate significantly new employment opportunities from investments and have prepared their young job-seekers for such opportunities; e.g. those associated with the adoption of new technologies. In addition to its strong links to employment, education and hunger and poverty, discussed in subsequent sections, globalization has expanded youth access to technology, especially information and communication technologies (ICT); it has also fuelled the flows of young migrants between and within countries in search of better opportunities.

11. With increasing flows of goods and services, a growing segment of youth now have access to essential consumer goods and services previously beyond their reach. Food, educational materials, clothing, medicines and information on political and social developments elsewhere in the world are quickly and easily transferred across borders. Unfortunately, globalization has also increased unemployment, as well as job flexibility and casualization, which have exacerbated the social exclusion of youth in many contexts. It has also provided youth around the world with easier access to goods and services that have encouraged consumerism, alienation and delinquency. For example, one aspect of globalization is the expanding global trade in illicit drugs and substances, which is tearing families and societies apart, spawning crime, spreading diseases such as AIDS, and killing youth and adults alike. It has been noted, for example, that deregulated and privatized markets have allowed the drug industry to spread its activities worldwide, opening new trafficking routes and production zones and infiltrating the "legal" economy to a degree that decision makers cannot ignore.[4] Even when they are not the main participants of this trade, youth are often the main targets of such trade promotion efforts.

12. Internet technologies increasingly serve as hubs for the communication and social networking of youth. These technologies are embedded into the lives of increasing numbers of youth every day. Internet use among young people across the

[3] See A/58/394.

[4] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "The globalization of the drug trade", *Globalization of Drug Trade*, No. 111 (April, 1999), available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/00115833e.pdf.

world is high and rising and offers new opportunities for youth to harness benefits of globalization from outside national borders. Countries that are very different in socio-economic and cultural terms may have similar patterns of Internet use. For example, in Kuwait, where the Internet is used by 23 per cent of the population, 63 per cent of users are young people. In South Korea, the Internet use rate is 60.9 per cent, though among the age group under 24, the figure is 95.1 per cent.[5] But inequalities in this area persist. Although globalization has facilitated the global spread of technology, large numbers of the world's youth are on the wrong side of the digital divide, and are unable to access this technology.

13. The rapid and major transformation of the global market has had some significant social costs that are being felt, not only in countries that have been marginalized from the process of globalization, but also in countries that have been relatively successful in adjusting to it. Generating unbalanced outcomes, both between and within countries, forces of globalization compound the challenges that youth encounter in their transition to adulthood. Changes in economic structure, including those due to relocation of production, along with changes in consumption possibilities and patterns, have a direct impact on livelihoods and incomes of population groups, including youth.[6]

14. Globalization has had, and will continue to have, an impact on youth employment opportunities and migration patterns. Today, in developed countries, there is an average of 142 young entrants (ages 20-24) to the labour force for every 100 persons about to retire; in 10 years, there will be a deficit of young workers, with 87 young persons for every 100 who leave the labour force. In the developing world, the situation is in stark contrast: developing countries today have 342 young persons for every 100 persons aged 60 to 64. Though each region is confronting different issues, the absorption of a larger number of young workers is a global issue that will continue to fuel migration.[7]

15. With respect to the job market, the introduction of new technologies has had a profound impact on the structure of the economy and the labour market, affecting low-skilled jobs. Trade liberalization, and especially the relocation of production to countries where wages are lower, often has negative effects on unskilled workers who are the first to lose their jobs. Because of their limited experience and skills, youth often comprise a disproportionately large share of those displaced from their jobs as a result of globalization.[8] In many parts of the world, the rate of unemployment is rising due to the ongoing transformation from agriculture to the less employment-intensive manufacturing and service industries. Trade liberalization has forced companies to be more competitive, leading many to become increasingly dependent on low-cost and flexible labour arrangements.

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[5] See International Telecommunication Union, available at www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/at_glance/Internet04.pdf; Barbara Wheeler, "The Internet and Youth subculture in Kuwait", *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, vol. 8, No. 92 (January, 2003); see also "World Internet project finds gaps between rich and poor, young and old, men and women", UCLA, available at www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=7488.

[6] See World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, *A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All* (Geneva, International Labour Organization (ILO), 2004).

[7] See A/60/871.

[8] See Lance Taylor, "External liberalization, economic performance, and distribution in Latin America and elsewhere", *Inequality, Growth and Poverty in an Era of Liberalization and Globalization*, G. A. Cornia, ed. (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2001).

National social protection schemes, in many instances, have failed to keep pace with new risks and vulnerabilities stemming from rapidly globalizing markets.

16. Migration offers youth an opportunity to capitalize on the benefits of globalization and to improve their well-being by moving to places where opportunities are perceived to be better. The flow of migrants has grown with the integration of the global economy, and young people are more likely than older persons to migrate across international borders and from rural to urban areas.[9] The reasons for migrating may vary from "push" factors such as poverty, dissatisfaction with local conditions, conflict and pressure on natural resources to "pull" factors such as better earning opportunities and the prospect for better futures.

17. International migration has traditionally been selective of better educated persons from poorer countries, including large numbers of youth. For example, tertiary students from sub-Saharan Africa are the most mobile in the world, with one out of every 16 — or 5.6 per cent — going abroad to study. In contrast, only one out of every 250 North American students, or 0.4 per cent, is studying overseas.[10] Though high-skilled migration can benefit the individual, it often has negative effects on the economy of the home country due to the drain of human capital.[11] In the long term, however, returnees may bring new ideas, approaches and international networks with them, benefiting not only themselves but also society at large.

18. Whatever the reasons for migration, the movement of young people is not without significant risk or hardship, including family disintegration, vulnerability to new diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and difficulties finding work. In addition, with few options and sometimes a fear of deportation or retaliation, many young migrants may fail to report abuse, racism, discrimination or exploitation. At the same time, youth are often well suited for coping with and adapting to the migration process because of their resilience, flexibility and energy.

19. There is a pressing need to recognize the presence of youth as a growing share of migrant streams and to make provisions for their economic, cultural and social integration. Migrant youth are often invisible to social service providers, and are unrecognized in national youth programmes in host countries. As youth migrants often make up an indispensable part of the host society's workforce, there is a pressing need to improve their access to public services in areas such as health, education and training and, more generally, to help improve the public's perception of young migrants.

20. Although the specific contribution of youth to remittances is unknown, for a growing number of countries, remittances have surpassed official development assistance (ODA) in volume and now constitute the second largest source of financial flows ($167 billion to developing countries) after foreign direct investment (FDI), which involves reverse flows in the form of profits, dividends, fees, charges,

[9] See Cynthia B. Lloyd, ed., *Growing up Global: The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries*, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (Washington, D.C., 2006).

[10] See UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2006); Global Education Digest (2006), available at www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=6513_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC (26 October 2006).

[11] See Economic Commission for Africa, *Economic Report on Africa 2005: Meeting the Challenges of Unemployment and Poverty in Africa* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 05.II.K.9).

interest payments, net "transfer pricing" and so on, and have diminished national economic sovereignty. For many countries, remittances exceed FDI. Compared with other sources of capital that can fluctuate, depending on the political or economic climate, remittances make up a relatively stable source of income, often rising counter-cyclically at times of economic downturns. Such remittances may also provide resources for investment for the development of youth unable to migrate. For example, remittance income may enable youth who do not migrate to finish school and could lead to higher future earnings. Although avenues for safe transmission of remittances may already exist in migrant communities, youth may need support to find and use these avenues. This requires the involvement of community groups, civil society, Governments and private institutions of receiving countries.

21. Young people around the world continue to be concerned about the negative consequences of globalization, especially its impact on the distribution of wealth and environmental degradation. Together with various groups critical of globalization, including non-governmental organizations, and civil rights activists, they have achieved remarkable results in bringing attention to the need to better manage globalization and its consequences, and to ensure the protection of basic human rights.

2. Poverty and hunger

22. Even with the unprecedented economic growth that has occurred in some regions of the world in the last two decades, 18 per cent of all youth — or over 200 million young people — live on less than one dollar a day, and 515 million live on less than two dollars a day.[12] Although poverty is often captured in income per capita, it also includes less easily quantifiable features such as lack of access to public services and to fundamental rights in the workplace and in the community. These aspects are particularly relevant to youth who may not be in the labour force, but may suffer other forms of deprivation.

23. Youth-specific data on hunger and malnutrition are largely unavailable; however, it is known that hunger and malnutrition kill nearly six million children each year.[13] Youth who survived hunger and malnutrition in their childhood years may do so with negative physical, biological and psychological consequences. Many young people continue to live in poverty and experience hunger, especially in rural areas, where education and employment opportunities are often limited. Progress towards reducing the number of hungry people in developing countries by half by 2015, envisaged by the Millennium Development Goals, has been very slow, and the international community is far from reaching its hunger reduction targets and commitments.

24. Hunger and poverty are often more intense in some regions, especially Africa, and in rural areas. Africa continues to suffer from repeated food emergencies caused by ecological and climatic factors and from conflict. Furthermore, urban-rural differentials in young people's access to education translate into urban-rural differentials in employment and income earning potential, thus exacerbating

[12] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Youth Report 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.IV.6).

[13] See Food and Agriculture Organization of the Untied Nations, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2005*, available at www.fao.org/docrep/008/a0200e/a0200e00.htm (10 October 2006).

poverty, deprivation and hunger, especially in rural areas. Poverty and hunger are also more intense among indigenous youth, who may have inadequate education, poor health and fewer employment opportunities.

25. Urbanization is a product of economic growth and the shift from agriculturally to industrially based economies (in the last decade, there has been a more than 4 per cent drop in agriculture as a share of total employment, and it is now roughly equal to that of employment in the service sector). Eastern and Southern Africa are subregions with the most rapid rate of urbanization. Asia is also showing strong trends of urbanization, and most of this growth will be in Bangladesh, the People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. Despite investment in rural areas, young people are more likely to move to cities in order to gain economic opportunity and, as a result of this trend, the average age of the population living in the city in comparison to rural areas will be lower over the next generation. This trend highlights the need to address how poverty affects the lives of urban young people, using lessons learned to improve their lot.

26. It is imperative that the multidimensional aspects of poverty are addressed to ensure that the transition to adulthood does not deepen poverty. Addressing youth poverty also requires that issues such as powerlessness, social exclusion, cultural impoverishment and loss of identity are addressed. A broader approach should also recognize that monetary poverty among youth can interact with and intensify other aspects of poverty in significant ways. For example, when young people have limited financial means, they are likely to limit spending on education and health, with serious repercussions for their effective participation in the global economy. Poverty can also be situational and vulnerable to short-term fluctuations as young people make the transition into independent living and adult roles.

27. It is important to address intergenerational aspects of poverty. Parental economic and non-economic poverty are likely to be passed on to children. Aspects of poverty, such as lack of access to information and communication technologies, which may be less relevant to parents, are critically important to young people if they are to function effectively in a globalized world. It is also important to promote rural development and support urban youth in marginal sectors to help reduce urban-rural disparities in poverty and hunger.

3. Education

28. Education is a basic human right that fosters the realization of full human potential. It provides knowledge and skills that enhance young people's contributions to the global economy and conditions the extent to which they benefit from globalization. Although the current youth population is the most highly educated and trained cohort ever, the pace of globalization and growing demands for new skills require that youth have access to continued education and skills training relevant to labour market needs. Those who do not obtain or are unable to complete their education are more likely to grow up poor.

29. Although the value of classroom education has received the most emphasis, all forms of education, formal or informal, promote critical and creative thinking, problem solving skills, informed decision-making, self-esteem and teamwork. Better-educated young workers have higher earnings, greater job stability and greater upward mobility.[9] Although education can take place over the life cycle, the period of youth is particularly important because it is often the final chance for

young people to acquire basic skills in preparation for the workplace. Success or failure in these years affects the readiness of young people to participate in the global economy and to assume leadership roles in their communities.

30. Governments have made sustained efforts to improve access to education in past decades, resulting in impressive improvements in access to primary and secondary education. Gross enrolment ratios for secondary school, for example, increased from 56 to 78 per cent in the last decade.[14] Generally, opportunities for secondary and especially tertiary education have improved less dramatically than for primary education. This situation, which directly affects youth, reflects in part, the intensification of Government efforts to recover costs in secondary and especially tertiary education. A positive trend, however, is that at the tertiary level, there is a gradual reversal in the male domination of education, with more women than men enrolled in tertiary institutions.

31. Despite progress in other areas, 115 million primary school-age children were not in school in 2002.[15] Further, in most developing countries, a large proportion of primary school graduates do not make the transition to post-primary education. The greatest concentration of educational deprivation is found in Africa and South Asia, and a child in sub-Saharan Africa can expect to attend an average of five to six fewer years of primary and secondary schooling than a child in Western Europe or the Americas. The gap between male and female literacy rates in Asia and Africa also appears to be widening. The largest inequalities are in Western Asia and North Africa, where educationally deprived girls outnumber boys by almost 3 to 1.[16] Youth, especially young women are therefore at a clear disadvantage to be able to cope in the global economy.

32. Youth currently take advantage of opportunities to access education outside their national borders, either through travel or via information and communication technology. For many youth, in both developing and developed countries, access to quality education is constrained by factors such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, lack of instruction materials and a shortage of well-trained staff. The cost of and shortages of equipment and qualified teaching personnel may also limit the academic options and skills that students can acquire at schools. As a result, technically demanding areas, such as the sciences, mathematics and engineering, often lack adequate funding and have lower enrolment. Despite the ongoing revolution in ICT, in many parts of the world, access to modern technology, including computers and audio-visual aids, is limited. This affects the quality of education and makes graduates inadequately prepared for the modern demands of the global economy.

33. Although the instability or unavailability of connections to the Internet bar many countries from linking students to the information superhighway, "schoolnets" have been established in some countries to promote the development of knowledge

[14] See UNESCO, "Global monitoring report on education for all", *Quality Education for All Young People: Challenges, Trends and Priorities* (Paris, 2004).

[15] See UNESCO, "Education for all, year 2000 assessment", in United Nations, *World Youth Report 2003: The Global Situation of Young People* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 03.IV.7).

[16] See UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005*, available at www.unesco.org/education/gmr_download/chapter3.pdf.

societies by connecting schools to the Internet and sharing information and resources.[17]

34. There is great potential for ICT to promote development that directly benefits young people, particularly in areas of education and livelihoods. In terms of accessing remote and rural areas, radio and low-cost mobile telephone technology are essential. ICT should be used to expand access to teaching and learning materials and to create an environment conducive to improved teaching and learning. Outside the classroom environment, ICT can help provide information on business development and related opportunities for youth. Various new livelihoods can be enabled by ICT, including web-based businesses.

35. Young women face additional challenges with respect to education. The majority still do not reach as high a level of educational attainment as young men. In many developing countries, young women are more likely than men to drop out of school at times of acute financial need or family crises.[18] Early marriage and childbearing are major impediments to girls' ability to complete their schooling. Young women are also likely to be taken out of school to assist with domestic and other chores. Structural problems, such as lack of bathroom facilities for girls and policies that prevent young mothers from continuing their education, still hinder educational attainment.

36. Though more women are participating in the labour force, the educational choices of girls and young women often limit access to certain types of employment and cause wage differentials to become entrenched. These choices are sometimes encouraged by stereotypical casting of women in domestic roles in textbooks and other teaching material. Although curricular revision has accompanied much of the education reform that has occurred in many countries around the world, much more remains to be done to provide relevant classroom education that addresses the needs of both girls and boys.

37. It is becoming increasingly clear that higher education and training are equally important in developing a labour force that supports growth and poverty reduction and helps businesses to survive global competition. Governments need to place greater emphasis on what happens when young people leave school by creating supportive and ongoing skills training that translates into poverty-reducing employment.

38. Training is a good investment if those trained are able to find better jobs and decent work or can use their newly acquired skills in their current positions. Obtaining a good match between the demand for and the supply of training should guide the planning of such programmes. The curricula of many training programmes often do not reflect current labour demands; thus, the acquisition of additional skills may involve extra costs to employers who may be hesitant to hire youth. As training alone does not create jobs, there should be a clearly defined relationship, with emerging labour market demands, to a large degree, shaped by the needs of the global economy and current educational requirements. The training curriculum should also take into account the intended clientele and the economic context. For

[17] See UNESCO, Schoolnet Toolkit (2004), available at www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ict/e-books/SchoolNetKit/SchoolnetKit.pdf.

[18] E. Kane, *Girls' Education in Africa: What Do We Know About Strategies That Work?*, Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series (World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2004).

some youth, skills training can replace formal education; for most, it will serve as a complement to formal education by providing job-specific skills. As the economy and the global labour market are constantly in flux, skills training needs to be constantly upgraded and expanded to suit the contemporary job market.

39. Characteristics of successful training programmes may include flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the workplace, links with the labour market and employers, on-the-job training, targeted programmes for disadvantaged youth, inclusion of young people in the informal economy, opportunities for mentorship after training ends and partnerships with local business. Training programmes, job centres or schools may also play a useful role in establishing an initial relationship with an employer for youth through identifying volunteer or structured internship opportunities that serve as vehicles for youth to acquire technical and social skills.

40. It is vital that education policy change the way girls and young women are valued in society. To maximize access for women and girls and to integrate disadvantaged youth, schools need to become more flexible with regard to the ages when students can enrol. This policy will encourage young people to enter the system at an older age or re-enter the system after dropping out.

41. An estimated 7.3 million young women are living with HIV/AIDS, compared to 4.5 million young men. HIV/AIDS represents a huge challenge to many countries, and in developing countries, young women and girls are particularly vulnerable because of poverty and lack of empowerment. The classroom is an appropriate setting to raise awareness. Schools and teachers, as part of comprehensive life skills programmes, should address HIV/AIDS prevention among young men and women. These programmes can equip youth to challenge gender stereotypes, counter discrimination and stigma, communicate effectively and make responsible decisions in their communities.

42. Youth who have dropped out from formal education before acquiring basic literacy skills should be given opportunities to obtain skills training to enhance their life skills and employability. Governments are encouraged to establish systems to ensure the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning for young people. These measures acknowledge the value of knowledge and experiences gained outside the traditional learning environment and demonstrate the importance of integrating formal and non-formal learning in overall education. These opportunities represent a second chance for youth who may not have had schooling opportunities during their childhood because of the need to work to supplement household incomes. Skills training improves the chances that such youth will become included in the mainstream labour market.

4. Employment

43. Although youth constitute only one fourth of the working-age population, they represent about half of the 191.8 million unemployed persons globally. During the last decade, youth unemployment rates increased globally from 12.1 to 13.7 per cent.[19] Owing in part to the increasing proportion of young people in school, the youth labour force participation rate fell from almost 59 per cent in 1995 to 54.1 per cent in 2005. A global deficit of decent work opportunities has resulted in a situation

[19] See ILO, *Changing Patterns in the World of Work*, International Labour Conference, 95th session (Geneva, 2006).

in which one out of every three youth in the world is either seeking but unable to find work, has given up the job search entirely or is working but still living below the US$ 2-a-day poverty line. Without the right foothold from which to start out right in the labour market, young people are less able to make choices that will improve their own job prospects and those of their future dependents.[20]

44. In most areas, youth unemployment rates are two to three times that of the general population. The ratio of the youth-to-adult unemployment rate was 3.0 in 2005, up from 2.8 in 1995. Moreover, youth have an even smaller share of decent and productive jobs.[21] Youth unemployment rates themselves do not adequately capture the challenges of young people in the labour market. Many work for long hours and for low pay, ultimately remaining poor. Since a majority of youth have not yet acquired the skills and experience required by most employers, their earnings have been falling in comparison to the rapid rise in earnings of skilled workers. This trend has been observed in most countries; in developing countries, this is owed mainly to the increasing size of the informal economy as a dominant source of new jobs.

45. In some developing countries, only 5 to 10 per cent of new entrants into the labour market can be absorbed by the formal economy, leaving the bulk of new jobs to be generated by the informal economy. The International Labour Office estimates that 93 per cent of all jobs available to young people in developing countries are in the informal economy, where there is often little respect for the rights and legal protections of workers, and where youth often work for long hours with little job security and low pay. Wages in the informal economy are estimated to be 44 per cent below formal economy wages.[22]

46. A positive aspect of the global economy and the growth in information and communication technology is the opening of new opportunities for youth to search for jobs. Young people are increasingly looking to online websites for career resources and training. In Europe, use of these sites by youth jumped by 21 per cent, to 9.5 million youth between 2005 and 2006, and outpaced the total growth of youth Internet use in Europe, which grew about 10 per cent, to 36.4 million youth, during the same period.[23] In areas of high Internet penetration, these services facilitate matches between young people and jobs. However, the majority of youth do not yet have access to these tools.

47. The adoption of social and economic policies that catalyse growth and increase the demand for labour is indispensable. Avenues for stimulating job creation include labour-intensive public works projects, incentives for business development and providing support for labour intensive sectors such as agriculture and the service sector, and sectors dominated by high levels of information and communication technology, which is particularly attractive to youth. Outsourcing and offshore manufacturing can provide new opportunities in the global economy, but these trends also raise concerns over job losses, lower wages and poor employment conditions.

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[20] See ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth* (International Labour Office, Geneva, 2004).

[21] See ILO, *Global Unemployment Trends Brief* (International Labour Office, Geneva, 2006).

[22] See ILO, *Youth and Work: Global Trends* (International Labour Office, Geneva, 2001).

[23] comScore Europe, "March European traffic to career resources, job search and training/education sites increases 27 percent versus year ago", 24 April 2006.

48. Though often requiring a significant influx of capital, the employment creation effects of labour-intensive public works projects can enhance the supply of jobs and improve local infrastructure in a manner not achievable with private investment. These projects can also stimulate local economies through the demand for tools, equipment and materials. They can also be particularly good entry points into the labour force for youth. In this context, a diverse range of agricultural and rural development projects in sub-Saharan Africa have contributed to expanding employment, but much more remains to be done.

49. Government policies that ensure that economic growth is geared towards employment creation and benefits for the poorer segments of the population can greatly affect the lives of young people. Yet, out of the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) of 21 African countries, only seven contain macroeconomic goals linked to employment creation, and only 11 have a core section containing an analysis of youth employment. In contrast, over two thirds of the PRSPs focused on the supply side, specifically issues of education and training.[11]

50. In many areas, there is a need to strengthen the link between young employees and their employers. Some countries have supported the development and enhancement of employment support services at university and secondary school levels. Partnerships with the private sector that identify skills in high demand and define entry-level requirements can help to fine-tune the role of educational institutions in easing the school-to-work transition for youth. They can also help to encourage the flow of labour to expanding industries where youth will be most productive.

51. In the light of the large informal economy in many developing countries, particularly in Africa and Latin America, serious consideration should be given to developing the institutional capacity to extend and improve the quality of social protection to youth working in the informal economy. Information on training and financial services for young people should be extended to those involved in the informal economy with the goal of assisting them to move from low to higher-productivity activities and upwards along the continuum of decent work.

52. Explicit in the United Nations Millennium Declaration is the commitment to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work".[24] In response, the United Nations, together with the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, launched the Youth Employment Network. Progress in the work of the Network is described in Section II of the present report.

53. The labour market challenges for young women are often more daunting than they are for men. Overall, the female unemployment rate is significantly higher than the male unemployment rate; the widest gender gaps occur in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa. The gender pay gap is negatively correlated with the participation of women in the workplace.[25]

54. Gender inequalities in education, training and recruitment are a major cause of persistent gender wage gaps in all sectors throughout the world. Women are often steered towards household-related or low-skilled jobs characterized by low status or

[24] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[25] See World Bank, *Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa.* "Constraints on Women's Work", chap. 4 (2004).

little pay; teachers, along with well-trained guidance and vocational counsellors, may be helpful in reducing this type of stereotyping so that young women may pursue life-long learning and real career development. Often, young women will need extra incentives to pursue studies in a male-dominated field. Without many role models in such fields, scholarships and mentoring programmes will open up new areas for women and fuel their confidence and ambitions.

55. To build assets and prosper in a competitive economy, young people often need access to credit and microinsurance. With access to a range of financial tools, young people can plan for their futures and invest according to their own priorities, such as school fees, health care, housing or starting a business. Adding to the survival toolkit of poor youth, these financial services connect this population with little or no assets to productive capital.

56. The needs of young people who engage in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and microenterprises are often overlooked. It is essential for commercial banks to extend lending to youth-headed SMEs and microenterprises. In this regard, central banks and designated financial service regulators must play a proactive role by integrating the objective of increasing access of SMEs and microenterprises to financial services into regulatory and supervisory policies.[26] As part of the enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship, the process of starting and expanding a new business can be streamlined and made less costly, while preserving transparency, so that small and medium-sized enterprises are able to train and hire more youth.

57. Through microfinance, many young women have become active participants in economic activities. Furthermore, because of microfinance and the enabling role it plays, they own assets, including land and housing, play a stronger role in decision-making and take on positions of leadership in their communities. Some areas have witnessed a positive shift in values and expectations that affect the role of women in society. However, in other cases, women's successful businesses have added to their burden, as domestic and family responsibilities may not be shared by male household members.

58. When choosing to engage in business enterprises, many youth have not acquired the financial and business acumen to ensure success in these activities. As starting any enterprise involves risk, entrepreneurship programmes targeting youth should include the provision of adequate information and support to enable them to choose whether or not to engage in economic ventures. Programmes should also be linked with opportunities to upgrade skills, learn business development technique and take advantage of networking opportunities, while providing youth with necessary resources for market access.

5. Proposed indicators for measuring youth development

59. Data limitations impede the assessment of national and international progress in addressing youth development, as outlined in the World Programme of Action for Youth. These limitations apply not only to the priority areas under the cluster "Youth in the global economy", but also to the other two clusters of priorities of the

[26] See United Nations Capital Development Fund and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Building Inclusive Financial Sectors for Development* (2006), United Nations (2006) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.II.A.3).

World Programme of Action for Youth — "Youth in civil society" and "Youth well-being". Appropriate and comparable indicators for measuring progress with respect to priorities such as globalization, intergenerational relations, armed conflict and leisure, for example, are difficult to define; and even priority areas, such as health and employment, for which data have traditionally been collected, often lack data that are specific to youth.

60. In response to the request by the General Assembly for the Secretariat, in collaboration with relevant United Nations programmes and agencies, to establish a broad set of indicators for measuring progress towards implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, an expert group meeting on youth development indicators was held at United Nations Headquarters, from 12 to 14 December 2005. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Programme on Youth, within the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and brought together academia, policy advisers, youth organizations, United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations to discuss possible indicators.

61. The value of establishing youth indicators that enable stakeholders to measure youth development over time and to compare progress within and between countries and regions was emphasized. It was noted, in particular, that indicators are essential for monitoring the impact of investment in youth, to help identify areas that need increased action and to advocate youth interests. It was noted that although the international community had made considerable progress in assembling data for tracking achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, data for tracking the specific progress of youth remain limited.

62. Participants in the meeting identified a number of constraints to, and opportunities for, effective data gathering and compilation of indicators for measuring youth development. The indicators discussed in this section are by no means exhaustive. Instead, they are proposed as an initial minimum set of indicators for tracking progress in promoting youth development. It is important to note that, to the extent possible, each indicator should be disaggregated by sex and by age groups of the youth cohort. This will permit better monitoring of the differential development of young women and men and younger and older youth.

Globalization

63. The impact of globalization on young people is hard to measure, and there are considerably fewer data available on the issues related to this topic. However, the ratio of youth to adult international migrants is an indicator that reflects the extent to which youth participate in migration. Although the data are currently only available for migration to countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, they are relevant because a large proportion of international migration is from developing to developed countries. The number of students from a country studying abroad indicates trends in youth study abroad. This indicator also measures the international mobility of students in tertiary education for countries having more than 400 foreign students. In addition, a proxy measure of access to ICT, the proportion of young people who have used the Internet in the last 12 months, is proposed. A better indicator could be Internet usage per week or month; unfortunately, these data are not universally available. The absence of such

data, which measure a critical element of youth involvement in the global economy, indicates a pressing area for future data collection and research.

Poverty and hunger

64. Various factors contribute to the paucity of data on hunger and poverty in relation to youth. The frequently temporary living arrangements of youth may cause them to be excluded from poverty surveys. Difficulties in the definition and measurement of hunger and poverty also frustrate monitoring efforts.

65. Four indicators are, however, proposed for consideration to be included in a compendium of youth development indicators for Governments to use to monitor progress on poverty and hunger. The indicators are the percentages of young people living in poverty and in absolute poverty and the percentages of underweight youth and severely underweight youth. For each indicator, it is important to disaggregate by age and sex, wherever possible. It may also be necessary to disaggregate by regions or other geographical or socio-economic groupings to facilitate within country monitoring.

Education

66. Five indicators are proposed for which global data are available to measure progress in youth education. Youth literacy rates provide a broad indication of the ability of an individual to read and write at a basic level. The gross enrolment ratio in secondary education, which indicates the general level of participation in secondary education, and the net enrolment rate for secondary education, which indicates the extent of participation of youth belonging to the official age group for secondary education, give indications of progress in providing youth with intermediate levels of education considered the minimal levels required to function in today's global economy. The gross enrolment rate for tertiary education is also proposed as a valuable indicator. This indicator gives a sense of access to educational levels essential in the global economy. A final indicator, the transition rate to general secondary education, is also recommended to provide a sense of progression from basic to secondary schooling.

Employment

67. Four indicators are proposed for monitoring progress with respect to youth employment. The youth unemployment rate is available for most countries and indicates the proportion of economically active youth who are unemployed at a given time. A second indicator, the ratio of youth to adult unemployment rates, provides a sense of the prevalence of unemployment among youth relative to adults, and is a much more precise indicator than the unemployment rate. A third indicator, the youth employment to population ratio, provides information on the ability of an economy to create jobs; for many countries, the indicator is often more illustrative than the unemployment rate. Employment-to-population ratios are of particular interest when broken down by sex, as the ratios for men and women can provide information on gender differences in labour market activity. In addition, the youth labour force participation rate, which is a measure of the proportion of the total youth population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work, provides a profile of the economically active youth.

Health

68. A number of indicators are available for tracking the health of youth. Five of them are proposed for Governments to consider for measuring youth development. First is adolescent fertility as a percentage of total fertility. This indicator focuses specifically on the 15- to 19-year age group. Childbearing at very young ages often threatens the physical health and social well-being of both mothers and children, and can have negative social and economic effects. This indicator therefore provides a measure not only of the level of fertility, but also of the age burden of childbearing at the national level.

69. A second indicator is the percentage of married or in-union young women currently using modern contraception. Access to and use of contraception is a key determinant of the reproductive health of young persons. Pregnancy and childbirth during the young adolescent years can have negative consequences on young people's pursuit of higher education and on their ability to attain economic stability before starting a family. Of even greater importance is the fact that the availability of contraception protects youth from unwanted pregnancy and the risks of unsafe abortions.

70. Third, the maternal mortality ratio, which measures the risk of death once a woman has become pregnant, provides an indication of the safety of pregnancy and childbearing in a particular context. In many developing countries, complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading causes of death among women of reproductive age. While this indicator is not age-disaggregated, it is known that a substantial proportion of maternal mortality occurs among young mothers who are having their first births. Together with adolescent fertility as a percentage of total fertility, this indicator provides a measure of the risk associated with pregnancy and childbirth.

71. Although age-specific death rates are typically relatively low between 15 and 24 years, the top three reported deaths by cause for ages 15 to 24 give an indication of the causes of youth mortality. Variations in these causes across countries provide a sense of differences in national disease priorities for the youth population.

72. The probability of a 15-year-old dying before age 25 provides a sense of the life expectancy of youth. Since these are often among the healthiest years of life, major departures from 100 per cent survival would suggest a need for health interventions.

Environment

73. Youth-specific indicators relating to the environment are hard to define. Three indicators of access to water and sanitation are selected for consideration. They are the percentage of youth severely deprived of water, the percentage of youth severely deprived of sanitation and the percentage of youth severely deprived of shelter. Although these indicators cover only water and sanitation, they may indirectly be proxies for the broader environmental context in which youth live.

Drug abuse

74. Data on drug use are often unreliable, as drug use among youth is likely to be more surreptitious than at other ages. The lifetime prevalence rate of drug abuse among youth indicates whether different types of narcotic drugs (cannabis,

cocaine/crack cocaine, heroin, opium, amphetamine/methamphetamine, ecstasy and inhalants) have been used at least once in a lifetime. It suggests the potential for the development of more frequent and problematic patterns of drug abuse.

Juvenile delinquency

75. In most countries, children and young persons who act against the law are protected, up to a certain age, by a juvenile justice system. As a result, data on juvenile delinquency may be incomplete. It is suggested that, although the data are not available across countries, the rate at which youth are committed to closed institutions be used as a measure.

Participation

76. Three indicators are suggested to measure the level of youth participation. The first is voting age; the most fundamental way to participate in a democracy is by exercising the right to vote. The second is the legal minimum age of marriage without parental consent. This indicator provides information on the age at which people are thought to be mature enough to take responsibility for their own lives and may indicate the extent of youth autonomy. The third indicator is the existence of a national youth council or forum. Youth councils and forums have been the traditional channels of cooperation and exchange of information with national Governments and other decision makers. Although this indicator does not provide any information on the quality of functioning of the youth council, it indicates the existence of machinery for this purpose.

Leisure

77. No globally comparable indicators on leisure among youth are available. There is therefore a need to gather data on youth access to leisure activities such as sports and cultural entertainment. Further discussion is required to determine which indicator would be comparable across countries.

HIV/AIDS

78. A number of indicators are being used to measure the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic globally. Three indicators are proposed for assessing progress with respect to youth and HIV/AIDS. These are the HIV prevalence rate among youth, the percentage of youth with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS and the percentage of youth who used a condom at last high-risk sex.

Girls and young women

79. All indicators proposed here should be disaggregated by sex, wherever possible, to provide a sense of how girls and women fare in relation to all the priority areas. In addition to this, measures of progress in areas such as violence and discrimination against women are required for a full picture of the situation of girls and young women. One indicator for which data are available is the percentage of all women who have undergone female genital cutting. Female genital mutilation or cutting poses serious health risks for many girls and young women, who live mostly in Africa, but also in countries in Asia and the Middle East.

Intergenerational relations

80. Improvements in intergenerational relations are difficult to measure. However, the changing context of intergenerational relations might be assessed by examining the changing age structure of the population. The median age of the population gives a sense of how "young" or "old" a population is, and hence, a sense of the urgency of bridging the intergenerational gap. An additional indicator on this intergenerational context is the proportion of the population above 60 years of age.

Armed conflict

81. The past decade has seen an unprecedented increase in the involvement of young people in armed conflict, both as victims and as perpetrators. Unfortunately, no age-disaggregated data is available, nor is there agreement on how to define a country in conflict. A proposed proxy indicator is the estimated number of youth refugees by country of origin, which provides insight into the number of young refugees.

Information and communication technologies

82. The indicators identified to measure progress on youth and in ICT are the proportion of young people who used a computer in the last 12 months and the proportion of young people who used the Internet in the last 12 months. These indicators refer to the use of computers and the Internet from any location, including work. Young people's access to the computer and the Internet vary widely, depending on the context in which they live. The differentials across countries indicate the development gap among youth.

C. Conclusions and recommendations

83. The interrelationships among the priority areas discussed in the present report strongly suggest that a holistic approach is required to address youth development in the changing global economy. It requires that Governments work with various stakeholders, particularly young people and youth-led organizations, to develop integrated solutions that support the full transition of young people to adulthood.

84. As suggested by the report, the measurement of progress, with the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, has been constrained by the paucity of data in a number of priority areas. The suggested indicators of youth development in the areas of globalization, poverty and hunger, education and employment represent only initial steps to address this major gap. These indicators have been proposed as core requirements for intercountry comparisons of progress with regard to youth development. Beyond these core indicators, Governments, civil society and national youth organizations can also gather data on additional indicators, as necessary, to better capture and monitor the progress of individual countries in youth development. This would deepen the understanding of transitions to adulthood and support more innovative and large-scale youth development interventions.

85. In view of the above, and the tendency for youth development to be constrained in the context of globalization, the Commission for Social

Development, at its forty-fifth session, and the General Assembly, at its sixty-second session, may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) **Integrate and protect youth in the global economy through the provision of employment under decent work conditions. This is essential for reaping the full returns to national investment in human resource development, especially in the education sector;**

(b) **Ensure that youth development, especially their access to food, education and employment, are specifically addressed in national policies and programmes, including PRSPs and other policy documents that aim to foster the participation of countries in the global economy;**

(c) **Ensure adequate funding for education, including programmes geared at fostering the acquisition of requisite skills by youth, in order to overcome the mismatch between available skills and the demands of the labour market shaped by globalization;**

(d) **Improve the ability of young people to make a better transition into the world of work and enhance their access to the changing labour market. Governments should promote policies that expand opportunities for youth to get quality education and training. Skills development must be combined with other programmes that are targeted at the specific labour market needs of youth and that focus on the multiple needs of those most at risk of joblessness. Skills training must be incorporated into education planning at all stages, as it provides an opportunity for youth to realign their skills to the changing needs of the competitive international economy;**

(e) **Promote youth involvement in information and communications technologies in all sectors, in a manner that encourages youth to assume leadership roles in developing and modifying ICT to better reach youth living in areas outside current ICT networks;**

(f) **Encourage Governments to establish mechanisms to monitor the development of youth in the context of the global economy. In particular, Governments may wish to promote the establishment of comprehensive databases on the youth indicators proposed in the report within their youth ministries or similar offices. For each indicator, it is important to disaggregate by age and sex whenever possible.**

II. Progress achieved by the Youth Employment Network

A. Introduction

86. The Youth Employment Network was established in 2001 to facilitate implementation of the global commitment to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work", as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000.[24] It is a partnership formed by the Secretary-General and the heads of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank that underpins and supports all the Millennium Development Goals.

87. The Network focuses its activities on the establishment of a network of networks at the political, technical and economic levels. Towards that end, it has worked to foster partnerships to promote youth employment. Building on the core partnership of the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO, it has been able to bring together policymakers, employers' and workers' organizations, young people and other stakeholders to pool their skills and know-how and diverse experiences to shape coherent policy and programme solutions to youth employment challenges.

88. The Network promotes a comprehensive approach to youth employment, which integrates macro and microeconomic policy interventions, addresses both labour supply and demand dimensions, and underlines the quality and quantity of employment. The process for developing national action plans provides a framework for national consultations on youth employment and for setting priorities that have broad-based ownership. These national action plans on youth employment also provide a delivery vehicle for developing and implementing strategies that give young people a real and equal opportunity to find full and productive employment and decent work.

89. The Network combines a political strategy with the technical experience and implementation capacity of its partner organizations to address the ongoing challenges of unemployment and underemployment among young people. It therefore plays an important role in facilitating communication and information sharing, linking good practice initiatives and stakeholders. In addition, it is assisting countries in developing their national action plans, strengthening the capacity of partners in this process, especially youth, and increasing the knowledge base and attention on issues such as the connection between youth employment and child labour and between youth employment and collective security.

B. High-Level Panel on Youth Employment

90. In 2001, the Secretary-General appointed a High-Level Panel of 12 experts and practitioners on youth employment to advise the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO on youth employment policy and to mobilize opinion and action in favour of youth employment worldwide. Their 2001 policy recommendations (see A/56/422) provide the overall guidance for the work of the Network. The comprehensive strategy of the High-Level Panel for achieving decent and productive work for young people includes the following elements:

(a) A focus on four global priorities — employment creation, entrepreneurship, employability and equal opportunities — that recognizes the need for comprehensive, integrated strategies;

(b) A delivery mechanism based on the preparation and implementation of national action plans on youth employment (using a multi-stakeholder approach, including youth participation);

(c) A follow-up process of information sharing and policy development (including peer partnerships).

91. General Assembly resolution 57/165, on promoting youth employment, translates the strategic vision of the High-Level Panel into a strong and focused

intergovernmental mandate, and encourages all Member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment.[27]

92. When the High-Level Panel met in 2003, it invited the full participation of a youth panel and representatives from ministries and Governments, social partners and civil society. At that meeting, agreement was reached on the next five steps for building a Global Alliance for Youth Employment. A roadmap and guidelines on implementation policies and best practices were issued to facilitate efforts by countries to address the four global priorities of employability, entrepreneurship, equal opportunities and employment creation. Social dialogue on youth employment and the key role of trade unions and employers' organizations were also highlighted. In particular, the need to involve youth organizations in all initiatives addressing youth employment challenges was recognized.

93. At its 2004 meeting, the High-Level Panel focused on how to facilitate the development of national action plans on youth employment. At that meeting, the President of the World Bank affirmed the support of that organization, as well as his personal commitment, to mobilize Governments in lead countries to prepare national action plans in time for the five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals in September 2005. The Youth Consultative Group was launched at that meeting. The Group represents youth and their organizations, interacts with the High-Level Panel and provides inputs to the decision-making processes of the Youth Employment Network. The Network was also requested at that meeting to present a comprehensive review of the linkages between employment, development and collective security that could serve as a basis for a coherent policy response.

94. At its 2005 meeting, the High-Level Panel recognized that the strategy it had laid out in 2001 had been widely accepted by Member States and Youth Employment Network partners and recommended that the Network take on three new areas of action: capacity-building for sustainable partnership engagement; knowledge management and communication; and coordination and facilitation, including leveraging and pooling political, technical and financial resources for youth employment initiatives. These areas of action are directed to support the development of national action plans in lead countries of the Network.[28] Thus, in addition to the implementation of the policy recommendations on youth employment formulated by the High-Level Panel,[29] the current phase of Network operations includes objectives set under these three new broad areas of action.

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[27] The resolution also invited ILO, within the framework of the Youth Employment Network, to prepare a global analysis and evaluation of these action plans in order to encourage countries to take action nationally, to initiate a peer review of action taken with others and to provide a forum for discussing the international dimensions of the youth employment challenge. The national action plans and progress reports submitted served as the basis for the report of the Secretary-General, "Global analysis and evaluation of national action plans on youth employment" (A/60/133).

[28] Taken together, these incorporate the six areas for action by the Youth Employment Network recommended by the High-Level Panel in May 2005.

[29] These policy messages form part of the conclusions adopted at the 93rd session of the International Labour Conference; see "Resolutions concerning youth employment" (Geneva, 2005).

C. Political leadership, support and national action

95. The High-Level Panel on Youth Employment called upon countries to volunteer as lead countries to take political leadership on youth employment within the international community and within the framework of the broader development agenda. These lead countries, with commitment at the highest level, undertake to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to share their experiences in order to encourage other countries to do likewise. To date, Azerbaijan, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Georgia, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Namibia, Nigeria, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have become lead countries of the Youth Employment Network and have reaffirmed their commitment to youth employment at the highest level. These 19 countries represent broad regional and economic diversity.

96. Many more countries have declared their commitment to the issue of youth employment and have provided support to lead countries within the framework of the Youth Employment Network. To date, Canada, China, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom have provided political, technical and/or financial support to the Network. The financial support of Finland, Ireland and Sweden has sustained the core operations of the Network. Sweden has pledged support for the next three years (mid-2006 to mid-2009), both for the Youth Employment Network secretariat and activities in lead countries. Canada is funding an initiative to place young Canadians in eight lead countries as Network Associates to support these countries in their development of national action plans.

97. The combination of lead country initiatives and support from other countries has strengthened the community of countries committed to promoting youth employment. This increase in the number of countries, as well as the range of experience, knowledge and resources they have brought into the network, has facilitated peer partnerships in initiatives to tackle youth employment challenges.

D. Status of national action plans on youth employment

98. The report of the Secretary-General on the theme "Global analysis and evaluation of national action plans on youth employment" (A/60/133) reviewed progress achieved by Member States with regard to national reviews and action plans on youth employment. The global analysis and evaluation was based on the submissions from 39 Member States that had responded to a note verbale of the Secretary-General dated 26 November 2004 requesting Member States to submit their plan or report on progress made in the elaboration of national reviews and action plans on youth employment. Many other Member States have since prepared or are in the process of preparing national action plans or other policy or strategic documents that address youth employment.

99. The global analysis examined the submissions from Member States against the guidelines provided in the report of the Secretary-General on promoting youth employment (A/58/229, annex I). The guidelines recommended that countries: (a) review and analyse past policies and programmes on youth employment to build

on lessons learned; draw on existing reports or policies on youth employment, such as poverty reduction strategies, national youth policies and national employment policies, and reports on ILO conventions relevant to youth employment to ensure that the national action plan is integrated into national policymaking processes and funding mechanisms; (b) involve young people, different government ministries and departments, employers, workers and civil society in the preparation of the plan; (c) put in place mechanisms, baseline indicators and statistical data for monitoring progress and evaluating the national action plan, and provide baseline indicators or statistical data to monitor progress; and (d) seek, as appropriate, assistance from the Youth Employment Network core agency partners — ILO, the World Bank, and the United Nations Secretariat — or from other outside institutions in the drafting process.

100. The development of a national action plan can be a long and complicated process, involving numerous stakeholders. The Youth Employment Network has been actively supporting lead countries and other Member States in the formulation of their plans by providing, through its core agency partners, technical guidance, training and activities to build capacity for the development and/or implementation of action plans. To facilitate the development of national action plans, the core agency partners of the Network have prepared or are in the process of preparing tools to assist countries.

101. ILO, for example, has prepared its guidelines for the preparation of national action plans on youth employment[30] to assist different groups — particularly government officials, representatives of employers' and workers' organizations, youth groups and other relevant stakeholders — to work together in countries in preparing a balanced and comprehensive national action plan on youth employment. It provides guidance to national institutions with regard to the information to be collected in preparation of a technical advisory mission fielded and coordinated by one of the core agency partners at the request of the country.

102. As policymakers seek measures to help young people make the transition into the labour market, they are hampered by a lack of information on what options are available, what works in different situations, and what has been tried and failed. In response, the World Bank is assembling a global inventory of interventions to support young workers. By documenting these experiences and consolidating the lessons learned through synthesis reports, this project will build a knowledge base on what can be done to support young workers. This knowledge will be accessible to policymakers and others concerned about youth employment.[31]

103. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Youth Employment Network secretariat, has prepared a report on the theme "Review of national action plans on youth employment: putting commitment into action", which is a more comprehensive version of the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/133), with additional analysis.[32] It details the substance and focus of national action plans, using the four global priorities for youth employment mapped

[30] These guidelines are still in development and are currently being pilot-tested in a number of countries.

[31] This project is being undertaken by Human Development Network, Social Protection Unit (HDNSP), under the auspices of the Youth Employment Network. It is being financially supported by the German Government (BMZ).

[32] This report is forthcoming.

by the High-Level Panel on Youth Employment. There is an assessment of the extent to which these strategies have been embedded in policies, and the degree of coordination between different ministries in tackling the youth employment challenge. Each subsection concludes with suggestions for determining benchmarks to assess progress towards the goal of creating opportunities for decent and productive work for young women and men.

104. In addition, the Youth Employment Network secretariat has prepared a resource directory for lead countries of the Youth Employment Network[33] to guide lead countries through the process of meeting their commitments to youth employment at the national and global levels, as well as to assist in strengthening the community of lead countries. It includes a module on the process of formulating a national action plan on youth employment to complement the policy guidelines prepared by ILO, drawing on experiences in a number of lead countries.

E. Strengthening youth participation

105. The Youth Employment Network recognizes the value of youth engagement in tackling youth employment challenges at all levels and is committed to promoting youth participation.

106. The Youth Employment Network is promoting young people as assets and a catalyst for development. Consultations with young people are instrumental in the work of the Youth Employment Network, just as it must be an integral part of any national youth employment strategy.

107. The means by which the Network has institutionalized this commitment is through the creation of a standing Youth Consultative Group. The Youth Consultative Group was launched in 2004, comprising representatives of large international and regional youth organizations to provide advice and guidance to the work on youth employment.[34] It is working to represent the concerns of young people on the function, direction and priorities of the Youth Employment Network. It interacts with the High-Level Panel and provides input into decision-making processes. It also serves as a catalyst and a resource to support youth participation in the development, implementation and review of national action plans. In particular, the Group can support Governments in the development of national youth consultative mechanisms to provide youth-specific inputs and expertise into the policymaking process.

108. The Youth Consultative Group actively supports youth involvement and active participation in a number of ways, including the development and implementation of youth participation mechanisms; mobilizing youth groups in lead countries,

[33] The directory is in the final stages of production and is currently being circulated among lead country focal persons for comments.

[34] The Youth Employment Network Youth Consultative Group, holding Youth Employment Network partner status, consists of representatives of 13 youth organizations drawn from a wider pool of 30 organizations: World Organization of the Scout Movement; Asian Student Association; Arab Youth Union; African Youth Network; European Youth Forum; Latin American Youth Forum; International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Youth; International Organization of Employers Youth; Mouvement International des Etudiants Catholiques; International Young Democrat Union; International Federation of Liberal Youth; International Union of Socialist Youth; International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth.

encouraging them to form networks and facilitating their introduction to Governments and United Nations agency country offices to enhance their opportunities to become involved in national policy development processes; and contributing to workshops conducted to build the capacity of youth groups to participate effectively in the process to develop national action plans.

109. Young people have been very active, both in lead and other countries. The Youth Consultative Group is collaborating with youth organizations and individuals to facilitate increased access to Governments and policymakers in order to promote greater inputs from youth into the various youth employment policymaking processes. Their involvement is leading to increased voice and acceptance for youth in local, national, regional and global initiatives on youth employment. In some countries — Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Rwanda, Nigeria and Namibia — youth organizations have even been the driving force that has shaped the decision by their Governments to become lead countries.

110. Building on their global work and experiences in the lead countries, the Youth Consultative Group, in partnership with the Youth Employment Network secretariat, is producing a guide for youth to facilitate and motivate their participation in youth employment policymaking. This publication also provides guidance for other stakeholders, primarily Governments, on how and why to engage youth, highlighting good practices on youth participation, empowerment and capacity-building in relation to youth employment policy. It provides a brief overview on the broader issue of youth engagement in policymaking, highlighting the main issues, debates and literature in this regard, including how to ensure equitable representation. It explores the concepts of participation and empowerment, and discusses different levels of participation that can be achieved and identifies relevant tools and methods used by youth groups to achieve sustainable participation, to build the capacity of youth and to empower them to participate effectively. Finally, it provides detailed guidance on what youth can do to get involved in youth employment initiatives using a range of tools and methodologies. The guide charts successes and challenges faced by youth involved in youth employment policymaking processes, as well as a list of resources where youth can find support in their endeavours.

111. Several other initiatives to assist youth have also been undertaken by the Youth Employment Network partners. For example, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs developed a toolkit, "Making commitments matter", to assist youth to participate in the 10-year review of the World Programme of Action for Youth, which was summarized in a report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly (A/60/156). The toolkit was developed for youth organizations and organizations working with youth. It can be used as a tool to assess progress of countries towards achieving the goals of the World Programme of Action for Youth; prioritize the work of youth organizations, based on those findings; and initiate action at the national level.

112. Youth organizations from around the world came together with the World Bank, to form the Youth, Development and Peace Network in 2005. Its mission is to facilitate dialogue, interaction and joint efforts between youth organizations and the World Bank, together with other actors involved in poverty reduction and various development issues. One pillar of the network focuses on the issue of employment,

and the Youth, Development and Peace Network is in close contact with the Youth Consultative Group to exploit synergies and avoid duplication of work in this field.

113. The World Bank has launched a trust fund to support training and capacity-building activities to strengthen youth organization involvement in decision-making processes. This decision underlines the conviction of the World Bank that young people represent a powerful force for change and that they need to be empowered to participate actively in development. The initial financial support for this multilateral trust fund was provided by the German Government. The trust fund activities will include a mapping of projects and activities supporting youth development being carried out by youth groups and donor organizations; a needs assessment of youth organizations based on this mapping; the design and implementation of training and capacity-building activities; and sharing experiences regionally.

114. The Youth Employment Network organized a high-level dialogue on youth employment, which was followed by a technical meeting in Geneva in June 2005. That event, co-financed by the World Bank, brought international policymakers face to face with young people to discuss the role of youth employment in the international development agenda. The interactive panel discussion involved labour ministers, members of tripartite delegations to the International Labour Conference, representatives of young people from the Youth Consultative Group and lead countries, as well as experts and practitioners on youth employment from international and civil society organizations. Discussions revolved around the issue of job creation.

115. The World Bank held consultations with youth around the world to gather inputs for the *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation*, which has a chapter on youth employment (see www.worldbank.org). The report was launched in September 2006.

F. Engaging partners and capacity-building

116. The main activity of the Youth Employment Network in its first three years focused on establishing the Network, which involved awareness-raising and advocacy on youth employment issues and establishing partnerships to tackle the challenges of youth employment. Although this aspect of the work of the Network continues, the focus of its work has shifted to more operational activities at the country and regional levels because the issue of youth employment has become more coherent and widely recognized by Member States and other stakeholders.

117. To date, bodies to coordinate national action plans have been set up in Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Jamaica, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Uganda, with the support of the Network. These developments demonstrate the strength of the national partnerships to put youth employment commitments into action.

118. The Youth Employment Network continues to build and expand networks, including deepening the involvement of more organizations, social actors and technical partners. The range of partnerships now spans lead countries, multilateral organizations, the private sector, youth groups, the academic community, representatives of employers and workers, and civil society groups. New multilateral partners, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), and the United

Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), are exploring or developing operational activities with the Network.

119. Products for advocacy and awareness-raising are being distributed, both through the country offices of the core agencies and youth groups. These include: information leaflets; Youth Employment Network fact sheets; Network information packs for potential partners, agency staff, journalists and the general public; the Youth Employment Network Newsletter, with an ever-growing partner and issues coverage; and a comprehensive interactive website. A working paper series was launched in 2005, with the first paper entitled "Youth employment promotion: a view of the ILO's work and the lessons learned". The second paper in the series will focus on World Bank messages on youth employment.

120. The Youth Employment Network has provided, leveraged and pooled resources to support activities on youth employment undertaken by a wide range of partners, including lead countries, core agencies, youth organizations, civil society organizations and other social partners. Assistance, including seed funding in some cases, to support activities on youth employment have expanded. For example, the Network was invited by UNOWA to help coordinate its work on regional security and youth employment. The UNOWA report on the theme "Youth unemployment and regional security in West Africa" was first issued in December 2005 and reissued in 2006.[35] It provides concrete recommendations on youth employment and calls on the Network to facilitate the establishment of a regional focal point for this issue. Support from the United Kingdom, Sweden and UNIDO have enabled the establishment of the Youth Employment Network/UNOWA unit for youth employment and regional security in West Africa.

121. There has been financial assistance from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for project activities in the lead countries, Senegal and Sri Lanka, as well as continued support from the German Development Cooperation (GTZ) for Youth Employment Network activities in Egypt and Uganda. The BMZ has also financed the global inventory of interventions to support young workers, which is being conducted by the World Bank under the auspices of the Network. There are projects on youth employment in a number of countries in Latin America — Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Peru and the Dominican Republic — that are being funded by the Spanish Employers' Association, private sector companies and the Spanish Government.

122. The Youth Employment Network has also been working with core agencies to develop improved youth employment indicators in order to address the inherent weaknesses of the unemployment rate of young people for measuring progress towards the youth employment goal of the Millennium Development Goals. ILO continues to produce and refine global and regional estimates on youth labour market indicators that have been published in its *Global Employment Trends for Youth* publications since 2004. These indicators are intended to both inform policies at the national level and to contribute to the overall monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals. In this connection, an expert group meeting on youth development indicators, organized by the United Nations Programme on Youth in December 2005, served as a forum to examine indicators used by the United Nations

[35] See UNOWA, "Youth unemployment and regional insecurity in West Africa", UNOWA issue papers, second edition (Dakar, Senegal, August 2006).

system to assess youth development, as a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 60/2 on policies and programmes involving youth. The proposed indicators will be included in the *World Youth Report 2007* and are referenced in section I of the present report.

123. The Youth Employment Network is actively promoting the inclusion of youth employment issues in the PRSPs. In that regard, the GTZ has supported efforts by youth organizations in Uganda to contribute to the PRSP process in their country. This project was part of a series of activities developed by GTZ to support the participation and empowerment of youth in national development strategies. The United Nations Programme on Youth and the National Council of Swedish Youth Organizations, with financial support from the Swedish Government, have initiated a technical assistance project on the theme "Tackling poverty together: the role of young people in poverty reduction strategies". The project will recruit a team of young people from seven countries — Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Sweden, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia — to participate in workshops aimed to strengthen the role of young people in poverty reduction strategies in Africa.

G. Recommendations

124. On the basis of the progress that has been achieved by the Youth Employment Network, the General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) **Encourage those countries that have prepared national reviews and action plans on youth employment to move forward to the implementation stage. Other countries that have not yet prepared national action plans should be encouraged to do so;**

(b) **Encourage all countries to submit periodic progress reports on their national action plans to address youth employment, and to invite the Youth Employment Network secretariat to submit a report on progress achieved, including progress in the preparation and implementation of national action plans on youth employment, to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.**